

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 16, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write to you to express our utmost support for your planned drawdown of the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan beginning no later than July of this year. We, the undersigned members of Congress, believe the forthcoming reduction in U.S. troop levels in Afghanistan must be significant and sizeable, and executed in an orderly fashion.

Our nation's economic and national security interests are not served by a policy of open-ended war in Afghanistan. At a time of severe economic distress, the war in Afghanistan is costing the United States more than \$100 billion per year, excluding the long-term costs of care for returning military servicemembers. At the same time, military and intelligence officials agree that Al Qaeda's presence in Afghanistan is diminished and that there will not be a military solution to resolve the current situation. It is simply unsustainable for our nation to maintain a costly, military-first strategy in Afghanistan.

A significant redeployment of U.S. troops from Afghanistan beginning in July 2011 will send a clear signal that the United States does not seek a permanent presence in Afghanistan. This transition will provide incentive for internal stakeholders to improve upon the political status quo, reduce corruption, and take meaningful steps toward the establishment of an effective, trustworthy, and inclusive governance structure. A meaningful start to withdrawal will also empower U.S. diplomatic engagement with regional and global stakeholders who share a common interest in the long-term stability of Afghanistan.

The majority of the American people overwhelmingly support a rapid shift toward withdrawal in Afghanistan. In fact, a Gallup Poll released on February 2, 2011 indicated that 72% of Americans favor action this year to "speed up the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan." Let us be clear. The redeployment of a minimal number of U.S. troops from Afghanistan in July will not meet the expectations of Congress or the American people.

Mr. President, as you work to finally bring an end to the war in Iraq by the end of this year, we must commit ourselves to ensuring that our nation's military engagement in Afghanistan does not become the status quo. It is time to focus on securing a future of

economic opportunity and prosperity for the American people and move swiftly to end America's longest war in Afghanistan.

Mr. President, we look forward to working with you to make that goal a reality.

Sincerely,



BARBARA LEE  
Member of Congress



RON PAUL  
Member of Congress



LYNN C. WOOLSEY  
Member of Congress



WALTER B. JONES  
Member of Congress



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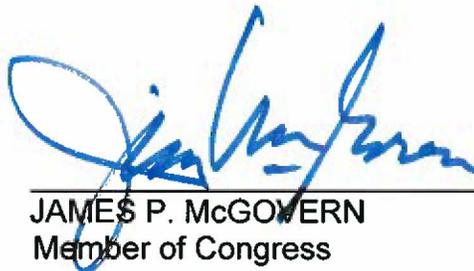
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